

SITUATION REPORT NO. 12
INCIDENT NO. 2002-040
DATE: July 6, 2002 TIME: 2:00 p.m.

TO: Governor John Hoeven
State Capitol
Bismarck, N.D. 58505

1. NATURE OF DISASTER: Drought/Fires – The Governor issued a state fire emergency declaration on May 30, 2002, and a state drought emergency declaration on July 1, 2002.
2. DEATHS AND INJURIES: The State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) has received reports of two fatalities, one of which occurred on May 2 and the other on May 26.

On July 4th, a firefighter assigned to the Kraft Complex was treated and released for an eye injury. To date, a total of 10 injuries have occurred during response to various fires throughout the state.

3. DAMAGES: Due to extreme fuel conditions, National Weather Service (NWS) forecasters, in cooperation with officials for the state of North Dakota, have issued an extreme Fire Danger Index for 22 counties. The following counties will remain in this status until further notice: Golden Valley, Billings, Slope, Bowman, Stark, Hettinger, Adams, Oliver, Morton, Burleigh, Grant, Sioux, Emmons, Kidder, Stutsman, Logan, LaMoure, McIntosh, Dickey, Ransom, Sargent and Richland.

Morton County Emergency Management officials reported during July 1 -3 the Mandan Rural Fire Department responded to five fires plus two flare-ups near the Graner Bottoms. The Mandan Fire Department battled two grassland fires caused by fireworks, and the Glen Ullin Fire Department responded to one fire.

On July 4th, the Napoleon Fire Department and area farmers extinguished a tractor and baler fire in Logan County eight miles south of Napoleon.

Late on July 4th, lightning strikes caused several fires in Sioux and Grant Counties. These new starts exhibited running fire behavior with some torching in areas where fuels were heavier. Flame lengths reached an estimated eight feet, according to the U.S. Forest Service.

One of the July 4th lightning strikes ignited the "AB Fire" within the Kraft Fire Complex. This two-mile-wide fire threatened the city of Porcupine; residents were evacuated as a precaution. The fire, which burned 2,000 acres, came within one mile of the town. Three air tankers were used in support of ground firefighting operations. The fire was under control by 4:30 a.m. July 5 and residents returned to their homes.

Five other fires that started July 4th in Sioux County are listed as contained and are in patrol status. North of Cannonball, the “Boot Fire” destroyed five acres, and the “School’s Out Fire” burned 20 acres. The “Bale 2 Fire,” located two miles southwest of Cannonball, burned 1,075 acres. The “OG Fire,” approximately six miles south of Cannonball, scorched one acre. The “Twin 2 Fire,” 1.5 miles northwest of Fort Yates, burned 285 fires. Four engines, with a National Guard tanker, are in use.

On July 5, the city of Porcupine was evacuated again when the “AB “Fire” from the previous night re-ignited. This fire passed northeast of the community, burning 3,800 acres. Two smaller fires occurred approximately two miles east of the Sioux County town. One was contained but shifting winds spread other fires that also bypassed Porcupine. A blaze, located 13 miles southwest of Porcupine, was reported early in the afternoon. The evacuation order is still in place.

On July 5 in Sioux County, the “Tenbrooke Fire,” located 10 miles west and five miles north of Selfridge, burned into the Kraft Complex. The complex measures 36,000 acres, an approximately 25,000-acre increase from its July 4th status. Engines from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and three graders from the National Guard are responding to the fire, which is 30 percent contained. Three air tankers are on standby. A total of 17 residences and 21 outbuildings have been lost. Sixteen residences and 15 outbuildings have been threatened.

In Grant County, the “Udell Fire,” located five miles west and one mile south of Shields, burned 1,600 acres. As of July 6, the fire was not contained but was not active. Mop-up crews are using a grader and water to extinguish hot spots.

In Grant County on July 5, a fire south of Raleigh was extinguished.

Midday on July 5, the fire in Graner Bottoms jumped the existing firebreak and was moving toward the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ Graner Bottoms campground. Containment of the fire required response from the Mandan Rural Fire Department, the N.D. National Guard and the N.D. Forest Service.

In northeastern Slope County on July 5, firefighters put out a fire, located one mile west and one mile south of the junction of N.D. Highways 21 and 67.

On July 5, a fire three miles north of the city of Bowman was extinguished.

In Golden Valley County on July 5, a fire was extinguished one mile north of the U.S. Interstate 94 scale at Beach.

On July 5 in Hettinger County, a fire 12 miles north and four mile east of Mott burned Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) land. The fire was extinguished.

On July 5, two fires were reported in McLean County. A bale fire near White Shield and a ditch fire two miles north of Washburn, along U.S. Highway 83, were extinguished.

A fire was extinguished on July 5, north of Strasburg in Emmons County.

On July 5, a grass fire in Logan County one mile east of Napoleon was extinguished.

4. RESOURCES:

LOCAL: No change from previous reports.

STATE: No change from previous reports.

FEDERAL: No change from previous reports.

5. VOLUNTEER ACTIONS: No change from previous reports.

6. MAJOR ACTIONS: In support of tribal and local governments, the following agencies are responding to recent fires: the Governor, his Chief of Staff, the N.D. Forest Service, the N.D. National Guard, the N.D. Game and Fish Department, State Radio Communications, the N.D. Highway Patrol, the N.D. Department of Transportation, the N.D. Aeronautics Commission, State Fire Marshal's Office, the N.D. Division of Emergency Management, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Forest Service and the National Weather Service.

On July 3, Morton County and city of Mandan officials extended the prohibition of fireworks to include campfires and all other forms of open burning until an official notice is released.

Also on July 3, Morton County officials requested assistance with the Graner Bottom Fire, which had rekindled. The National Guard provided two D-7 Caterpillar bulldozers to assist with building a firebreak. On July 5, Morton County officials requested the N.D. National Guard provide the two dozers and helicopters equipped with aerial buckets to fight the expanding fire in Graner Bottoms. A Mandan aerial applicator was dispatched but conditions were too windy for him to respond.

The National Guard also supported firefighting operations at the "Tenbrooke Fire" with helicopters equipped with aerial buckets. A 6,000-gallon and a 1,100-gallon water tanker trucks from the N.D. Department of Transportation were dispatched to the fire. Two DOT road graders were on standby at Selfridge.

On July 3, Dakota Prairie Grasslands officials upgraded fire restrictions to Stage 2 for Grand River and Cedar River National Grasslands. The prohibitions will remain in effect until rescinded or revoked. The restrictions for Sheyenne National Grasslands remain at Stage 1. Information on restrictions and exemptions can be found at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/dakotaprairie/>.

The North Dakota Highway Patrol is coordinating traffic control in response to the changing fire conditions in Grant and Sioux Counties.

7. ASSISTANCE NEEDED: No change from previous reports.

8. OUTSIDE HELP ON SCENE: No change from previous reports.

9. OTHER: Appropriate state, local, tribal, federal and private entity emergency operations plans (EOPs) and procedures have been implemented.

The N.D. Rural Fire Mitigation Guide and the N.D. Rangeland Fire Danger Index are posted on the N.D. Division of Emergency Management web site at:
<http://www.state.nd.us/dem/>.

Situation Reports published by N.D. Division of Emergency Management are posted on the Division's Internet home page. The address is:
<http://www.state.nd.us/dem/>.

Douglas C. Friez, State Director